

# STATE of the CITY



*March 6, 2006*

**M**ayor Greg Nickels took office in January of 2002 and was re-elected in 2005. His first term focused on the basic services that would restore people's confidence in City government. He worked to keep people safe, to fill potholes, and to make sure that when a citizen called the City with a problem, a human being answered the phone.

During the past four years, the City made tremendous progress on many fronts, from improving the delivery of basic services to tackling the major issues facing our community. We've taken great strides on light rail, the streetcar and replacing the Viaduct. We are making Seattle the most-prepared city in America for disasters. We've laid the foundation for great new jobs and economic growth. We're working to ensure that every person has a place to call home. And we have become a world-renowned leader in the effort to prevent global warming.

We've re-connected City government to its people, and the people responded. Seattle voters supported three important levies: renewal of the housing levy, which will build affordable housing and increase homeownership; renewal of the Families and Education levy, which will help close the academic achievement gap in our schools; and the Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy, which will bring the City's fire stations and equipment into the 21st century. In addition, Seattle voted overwhelmingly to keep the statewide gas tax increase for transportation funding.

But we do not rest on our laurels in Seattle — we roll up our sleeves. We will continue to make a difference in the lives of Seattle residents by making significant progress on issues that affect them every day — at home, in schools and on the streets. If this great city is to continue to prosper, we must address three critical areas: affordable housing, education and transportation.

Now that we are creating new jobs, we must also create more affordable housing opportunities so that everyone who works in Seattle can live in Seattle.

**G**reat cities need great public schools. We are working with Seattle Public Schools to close the public education achievement gap by supporting preschools and student health and by providing more support for families.



And we are solving our transportation challenges; people, goods and services must be able to move about the city. We will improve our streets, bridges, sidewalks and transit service and build a system that will serve the people of Seattle for the century to come. We will successfully complete the Link Light Rail to the airport and break ground for the line north to the University District.

We will replace that dangerous and deteriorating Alaskan Way Viaduct with a tunnel that will transform the waterfront into a public gathering space for the entire city for generations to come.

The City has accomplished a lot in four years. On the following pages, you'll find highlights of some of the progress on Mayor Greg Nickels' four priorities.

# The Alaskan Way Tunnel

**W**e are moving forward with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to replace the dangerous and deteriorating Alaskan Way Viaduct with a waterfront tunnel. The tunnel will give us the chance to transform the front door of our city into a spectacular public gathering place for generations to come.

We began this work five years ago after the Nisqually earthquake shook and damaged the aging, 1950s-era roadway. Today, with \$3.2 billion already committed to the project, we have the resources needed to start building the tunnel.



The overall project will cost \$4.4 billion. But we have refined our plans into a core tunnel project which would cost \$3 billion to \$3.6 billion. This would replace the most critical piece of the Viaduct and seawall with a tunnel, constructing the south end and central waterfront sections, including improvements to the Battery Street Tunnel. These are the portions at the greatest risk of serious damage in another earthquake. With the money committed, we can start the core tunnel project after environmental review is completed.

We are ready to start with utility relocation in 2008. Major construction would follow in 2010. We have four more years to secure the necessary funding to complete work outside of the core tunnel project. This includes improvements on Aurora and the construction of a new seawall north of Union Street. These and other improvements will provide the direct route commuters and freight desire from I-5 to the Seattle Center, Uptown and Interbay.





- **Alaskan Way tunnel and seawall.** Recognizing the urgency of this project, the Mayor has led the coalition to secure the money to begin building the critical pieces of the State Route 99/Alaskan Way tunnel and seawall by 2008. The City has \$3.2 billion committed or identified from federal, state and local sources.
- **Building light rail.** With permits issued and federal funds secured, construction began on the first phase of Sound Transit's Link Light Rail in Rainier Valley, Beacon Hill, SODO and downtown. The extension of light rail to the University District received the highest federal rating, making it a national priority for future funding.
- **Getting Bus Rapid Transit going.** To improve travel along the Aurora Avenue corridor, the City upgraded 14 signals to allow bus priority at congested intersections, installed better bus shelters in improved locations, and secured \$9.4 million for other bus and pedestrian safety improvements. The money will be used to increase speed and reliability on one of Metro's busiest bus routes.
- **Improving parking.** The City installed new, more convenient parking meters, which accepted credit and debit cards, in downtown Seattle, the University District, Capitol Hill, First Hill and Ballard. SPD cracked down on drivers who fraudulently use disabled parking placards. Parking changes improved the movement of buses on the surface streets through the downtown area when the Bus Tunnel closed.
- **Keeping kids safe.** Seventeen schools received bright signs or flashing beacons to remind drivers to slow down near schools. The Mayor also launched a 10-point Pedestrian Safety campaign. This effort included upgrading and re-marking dozens of crosswalks, installing new pedestrian awareness signs, making improvements along walking routes for two elementary schools, and enhancing use of the speed watch trailer in neighborhoods. Pedestrian signals were also installed at key intersections in West Seattle, Beacon Hill and lower First Hill. Pedestrian fatalities are down 50 percent, while pedestrians with serious injuries fell 17 percent.
- **Fixing potholes & maintaining streets.** The City established a pothole hot line (684-ROAD), and the Pothole Rangers now fill reported holes within 48 hours. The City has repaved 125 lane miles of street, the most since 1998.

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- **Helping commuters.** The City kept drivers moving by synchronizing signals at more than 250 locations around Seattle and launching a new online service providing real-time driving conditions.
- **Improving the Mercer Corridor.** The two-way Mercer Boulevard with a narrow Valley Street was selected as the preferred alternative to untangle the Mercer Mess.
- **Building the South Lake Union Streetcar.** The City developed a Local Improvement District (LID) that will contribute \$25 million to the streetcar's capital cost of \$47.5 million. In addition, the City secured another \$17.7 million for the project. This clears the way to start construction in spring 2006 and operations in 2007.
- **Moving freight.** The City worked with local industry to fix freight-traffic bottlenecks and to replace damaged and missing truck route signs. The City secured \$2 million from the state to fix signals and improve signs in the Duwamish area.
- **Taking care of bridges.** The City started rebuilding the Fremont Bridge approaches and completed restoration of the West Emerson Street Bridge over 15th Avenue West. Crews finished the first phase of restoring the historical areaway street wall at Second Avenue South and South Main Street in Pioneer Square. Restoration work has also been done on Cowen Park Bridge and the 20th Avenue Northeast Bridge over Ravenna Park. The 73-year-old Princ-

eton Bridge was replaced in 2002, connecting five neighborhoods with the Sand Point Way corridor and nearby businesses.

- **Investing in clean & green transportation.** The City's fleet now includes nearly 550 advanced technology and alternative fuel vehicles. Seattle Public Utilities' contracted garbage and recycling fleet switched to biodiesel and ultra-low sulfur fuel to support Seattle's climate protection goals and improve air quality.
- **Funding for transportation projects.** In the past four years, the Mayor and Sen. Patty Murray helped persuade Congress to support: \$239.5 million for the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project and \$5.2 million for the South Lake Union streetcar. The City also secured money from the Puget Sound Regional Council to widen the Spokane Street Viaduct, support the South Lake Union streetcar, improve 35th Avenue Northeast, build the Westlake Transportation Hub, extend the Burke-Gilman Trail, improve Greenwood Avenue North, and resurface the Phinney Avenue, Fremont Avenue and North 50th Street area.







- **Creating a safer Seattle.** Seattle continues to be one of the safest big cities in the nation.
- **Promoting a healthy nightlife.** The Mayor announced plans to ensure Seattle's growing number of clubs and bars are safe places to have fun without undue impacts on Seattle's neighborhoods. The Mayor and Councilmember Nick Licata also created a task force of club owners, neighborhood businesses and residents to promote nighttime entertainment while addressing the concerns of the people and businesses in these neighborhoods.
- **Reducing criminal activity in neighborhoods.** The City reduced criminal activity by increasing officers' presence in problem areas. In 2004, bicycle patrols in Cal Anderson Park reduced 911 calls from 680 to 459 in one year, and officer-initiated stops rose from 897 to 1,200 in the same time period. The Anti-Crime and Neighborhood Corrections Initiative Teams expanded into all five precincts to target hotspots identified by crime analysis and community members.
- **Increasing accountability for police and residents.** The City installed video cameras in 94 patrol cars, giving SPD the ability to record patrol stops and provide more accountability and safety. The remaining 66 patrol cars will be outfitted in 2006.
- **Improving fire facilities.** With the passage of the \$167-million Fire Facilities levy, Seattle will rebuild or renovate 32 of 33 fire stations throughout the city. So far, work has begun on a new Joint Training Facility, two fireboats, and a new Fire Station 10, which includes the Emergency Operations Center and the Fire Alarm Center. In addition, emergency generators have been delivered to all six community centers and an emergency water supply for fire fighting during an emergency is in place.
- **Increasing emergency preparedness.** The Mayor created an Emergency Preparedness Bureau and Seattle has participated in numerous anti-terrorism and natural disaster exercises. In 2005, an audible public warning system was installed on the Elliott Bay waterfront to alert the public in case of a terrorist attack or natural disaster. Seis-

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mic retrofits were also done to City-owned bridges and buildings, as well as to more than 160 Seattle homes.

- **Securing homeland security grants.** Between 2002 and 2005, Seattle received approximately \$42.2 million in federal security grants. This grant money, combined with an additional \$45.5 million of Seattle's own funds, is being used to secure facilities, equip and train first responders, improve communications and more.
- **Investigating crime scenes.** SPD established a pilot Crime Scene Investigation Unit. These highly trained detectives processed more than 100 serious crime scenes in just six months. In 2005, Seattle Police cleared five unsolved homicides, including a case from 1968, and are re-investigating 73 felony murder cases overturned by the Washington State Supreme Court.
- **Protecting victims of domestic violence.** Seattle supported state legislation providing services and financial assistance for domestic-violence victims. Seattle Police joined with the Municipal Court and City Attorney's Office to implement a domestic violence firearms project to increase the personal safety of victims by having police officers take custody of firearms at incident scenes.
- **Strengthening partnerships between police and community.** Seattle Police implemented a pilot project using two full-time officers for youth outreach in South Park and with the Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities. A new police precinct opened in southwest Seattle, bringing police officers closer to the people they serve in Delridge, West Seattle, South Park and Georgetown.

- **Recognizing excellence.** In 2003, SPD received national accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Of the 25 largest cities in the nation, SPD was one of only four to win recognition for its policing, procedures and training.
- **Expanding alcohol impact areas.** After creating two new Alcohol Impact Areas in the University District and central Seattle in 2004, the City asked the Washington Liquor Control Board to make the alcohol sales restrictions mandatory. These two areas account for most of the alcohol-related calls to the police and fire departments. Mandatory restrictions of alcohol sales in the Pioneer Square area took effect in the fall of 2003.
- **Securing reservoirs.** In 2002, Mayor Nickels announced plans to replace Seattle's open reservoirs with underground structures to improve the quality and security of our water supply and provide 76 acres of new open space, which will eventually be transformed into full-fledged parks.





# CREATE JOBS & OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



- **Top credit rating.** Thanks to the City's strong financial management practices, Seattle kept the highest credit ratings possible on its limited-tax general obligation bonds. These high credit ratings mean Seattle, one of only a few large cities to win these coveted ratings, saves on interest expenses when it issues bonds.
- **Supporting contractors.** The City provided help to small and disadvantaged construction contractors through the Contractors' Development and Competitiveness Center. Between January 2004 and December 2005, the Center helped several small businesses win contracts worth \$19.9 million.
- **Clearing the logjam at Northgate.** The Mayor and City Council, with the hard work of businesses and residents, have cleared the way for revitalizing this important urban center. Progress includes a new library and park under construction; Fifth Avenue street improvements to start in early 2006; and permits approved for a major addition to Northgate Mall and for Northgate Commons on the south lot.
- **Changing City's relationship to University of Washington.** Recognizing the city-wide and regional benefit of the University, from the quality education it offers to the research that helps drive the tech economy, Mayor Nickels led the effort to end the 25-year-old lease lid in the U-District. This will unleash new investment in the University District and allow more affordable housing opportunities and public safety improvements.
- **Supporting Rainier Valley businesses affected by light rail.** More than \$6.1 million has been spent to help 126 businesses disrupted by light rail. Of the businesses that received assistance from the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, 79 percent have relocated within the Rainier Valley. In 2005, Community Development Block Grant funds were used to provide business disruption payments totaling \$1.3 million to 60 businesses along the Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridor.
- **South Lake Union.** The City supported the growing life sciences and biotechnology research businesses in the South Lake Union neighborhood. In 2004, companies and institutes moving in or expanding into the South Lake Union neighborhood created more than 500 new jobs.

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- **Creating jobs.** From 2002-2005, the Seattle Jobs Initiative has placed more than 2,051 individuals in permanent jobs, the majority with benefits, at an average starting wage of more than \$10.67 per hour.
- **Promoting manufacturing and maritime industries.** In 2004, the City released the Mayor's Action Agenda for both industries, and implemented strategies to support the thousands of family-wage jobs they provide. Strategies include establishing a permit liaison to ensure reliable and predictable permitting for companies looking to locate here, and to improve and expand their businesses. Through the Seattle First initiative, the City also worked with industry groups and 250 individual businesses directly.
- **Helping small businesses.** The City established a Small Business Advocate that has helped more than 500 small- and medium-sized businesses with permitting and regulatory processes. From 2003 to 2005, projects received more than \$464,000 in Neighborhood Business District Grants supporting 58 business associations. Technical assistance was also provided to more than 954 Seattle businesses, more than 94 start-up and small business entrepreneurs received loans, and neighborhood business districts received help to cope with construction projects.
- **Strengthening neighborhood businesses.** The City encouraged investment in neighborhood businesses in 2003-2005 by funding more than 61 façade improvement projects and approving an additional 50 construction projects worth more than \$637,500 in seven neighborhoods, including Broadway, the U-District and Rainier Valley in 2003-2004.
- **Streamlining permits.** The City cut red tape for entrepreneurs by streamlining construction permits, reducing wait-time to file and review permit applications, and establishing a one-stop Master Business License in partnership with the state.
- **Focusing on Southeast Seattle.** The City worked with community leaders in South-east Seattle to take advantage of the incoming public investment in transportation and housing for the community.
- **Renewing Broadway.** The City formed a new business improvement area, funded winter lighting and pocket park improvements, helped provide cleaning and security services, and passed zoning changes to help foster new development and revitalization opportunities for the Broadway business district.
- **Promoting the film industry.** The number of film permits issued by the Film Office has steadily increased thanks to City's Film Incentives, with a total number of 295 film projects in 2005.
- **Promoting the music industry.** The City supported the local music industry in 2005 by releasing a Seattle Music Map highlighting the local music scene and its history and by dedicating a Jackson Street Jazz Sign. In addition, "Seattle Presents," the free lunch-time concert series in City Hall, attracted an audience of more than 4,600 to 30 performances, employing 279 artists.
- **Community Development Corporation projects.** In four years, the City provided more than \$4.4 million to local community development corporations. The money supported such neighborhood projects as Welch Plaza in the Central Area, with 162 units of housing and 18,000 square feet commercial space; Rainier Court I/Courtland Place in Southeast Seattle, with 200 units of low-income senior housing and 9,000 square feet of commercial space; and Croft Townhomes in West Seattle, a 21 unit low-income transitional housing development.
- **Engaging Seattle's creative economy.** The City annually invested in more than 100 arts and cultural organizations, supporting 8,156 performances and events, employing 14,456 artists and serving an audience of more than 2.8 million.



- **Working to end homelessness.** Under the 10-year plan to end homelessness, Seattle is working to change its shelter system to a housing system by providing services that help homeless people stabilize their lives, get healthy, find work and remain housed permanently.
- **Supporting children's education.** Seattle voters renewed the Families and Education Levy in 2004 to provide an opportunity for success in school for every child and every family. The levy concentrates on closing the academic achievement gap by providing programs and services focused on children who are not performing at grade level or who are at risk of not graduating. Overall, the new levy will invest \$116.8 million in Seattle children over seven years by supporting programs for family involvement in schools, after-school activities, student health, helping youth at risk of dropping out of school and early learning.
- **Supporting immigrants and refugees.** If the population trends continue, there could be as many as 120,000 foreign-born residents in Seattle by 2010. Seattle is working to promote full participation of immigrants and refugees in the economic, social and civic life of the city. In 2005, the City spent

\$7.4 million on 75 targeted programs that provided counseling and family support, education and English as a second language services, information and outreach. In addition, the City is translating service brochures and Web sites, providing outreach in multiple languages and offering interpretation services for customers.

- **Helping families work.** Through our "People-Point: Bridge to Benefits" the City provides one-stop access for low-income to moderate-income families and individuals to several benefit programs, including child care, energy and utilities, food and health insurance.
- **Helping neighborhoods.** The Neighborhood Matching Fund has awarded \$11.2 million to 637 community-based projects all over Seattle since 2002. The P-Patch program added 16 new gardens. Today, 70 P-Patches serve more than 6,000 people throughout Seattle.
- **Building a livable, walkable, 24/7 downtown.** Mayor Nickels' "Center City Seattle" strategy encourages economic growth, transportation, new housing, and great urban neighborhoods in Seattle's downtown and the nine neighborhoods immediately around it. By 2024, this area is projected

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to produce 50,000 new jobs and more than 22,000 new housing units. The Mayor's Center City Seattle strategy proposes: downtown zoning changes; redevelopment of the central waterfront; and building the Alaskan Way tunnel, light rail, the Westlake streetcar, new and improved parks, biotech development, and new mixed-use development.

- **Increasing affordable housing opportunities.** In 2002, the Mayor worked to pass an \$86-million Housing Levy that supports affordable homes for more than 2,000 households. Since 2003, the City awarded \$50.6 million to help build or preserve more than 1,143 affordable rental units.
- **Helping families buy homes.** In 2004 and 2005, the City helped more than 115 families buy homes in Seattle. A \$3.5 million investment by the City leveraged more than \$18.7 million in private and other public money. In 2005, Seattle launched a program to help Seattle school teachers buy homes in the city by providing low-interest, long-term loans of up to \$45,000. Seattle is committing \$1.8 million to fund the program, which will help up to 70 teachers in the first year.
- **Sending kids to camp.** The City added 300 summer day camp scholarships for low-income families in 2004, bringing the number of kids served to almost 500.
- **Improving parks and community centers.** Over the last four years, the City developed or enhanced 55 parks all over Seattle, acquired 46 acres of new park land, and opened six new or expanded community centers – Jefferson, Magnuson, International District/Chinatown, High Point, Yesler, and Southwest. The City acquired the historic West Point Lighthouse to augment Discovery Park and provide another space for environmental programs. It will also add the 23-acre Capehart housing site to this 534-acre park. Green Lake's algae bloom problems were stopped, making it safe for swimming and other activities. The treatment will keep Green Lake clean and safe for 10 years or more. One of the newest open spaces, the I-5 Colonnade, reconnects

the Eastlake and Capitol Hill neighborhoods with pedestrian walkways and bicycle commuter connections, offering Seattle's 10th off-leash area.

- **Providing meals for low-income children.** The City served nearly 12,500 free, healthy meals through the Summer Meals Program at 120 sites in 2004 and 2005.
- **Supporting adoptive families.** A 2004 ordinance allows employees who are parents of newborn or newly adopted dependent children to use sick leave to spend time with their children after the child's birth or adoption.
- **Making City services more accessible.** In 2002, Mayor Nickels created 684-CITY, a one-stop, easy-to-remember phone number for service requests and complaints about City government. Web-based services have also been added, such as paying utility bills, renewing business licenses, purchasing and renewing pet licenses, and issuing electrical permits. Neighborhood Service Centers are now open longer and on weekends.
- **Widening the window on government.** The Seattle Channel was named the best Public TV Station by the Seattle Weekly. In addition to award-winning public-interest programs and City Council meetings, viewers can now watch board meetings for Sound Transit, the Port of Seattle, Public Health - Seattle & King County, and the Seattle Public Library.
- **Preparing youth for work.** Since 2004, more than 650 low-income teens and young adults participated in the Seattle Youth Employment Program, which provides academic support, teaches job skills and matches participants with available work opportunities. More than 85 percent of last year's participants met their educational and employment goals. Fifty-six students graduated from high school and more than 80 went on to get non-subsidized jobs in the private sector.
- **Meeting seniors' needs.** Since 2004, the City provided 1,645 seniors with monthly market baskets of fresh produce, and vouchers for 3,125 seniors to use at local farmers'

markets. By providing training and support to family caregivers, an average of 2,720 older and disabled adults in Seattle and King County are able to remain in their own homes each year. Transportation services are provided to an average of 3,300 elders and persons with disabilities each year in Seattle and King County. In 2005, the City helped more than 580 older adults find work.

- **Bringing technology to our neighborhoods.** Since 2002, the City's Technology Matching Fund has awarded \$441,530 to community organizations to provide residents with access to computers, the Internet and other technologies. In addition, Seattle provided high-speed Internet service to 25 new community-access sites. We now reach more than 500 computers at public and non-profit sites across the city, as well as 767 computers in City libraries. In 2005, the City launched a WiFi pilot project to test wireless technology in six locations. The pilot has more than 125 users each day.
- **Opening libraries all over Seattle.** Since 2004, the City opened a new, world-renowned Central Library and 10 expanded, new or renovated branches.
- **Keeping neighborhoods clean.** Mayor Nickels launched "Clean and Green Seattle" in 2002 to bring City workers and neighbors together to clean up parks and streets. Since then, Clean and Green teams have:
  - Collected more than 130,000 pounds of litter;
  - Recycled more than 6,000 pounds of recyclable materials;
  - Repaired more than 2,921 streetlights;
  - Painted-out more than 5,709 graffiti sites;
  - Planted 2,144 plants and flowers;
  - Swept more than 232 curb miles of residential streets;
  - Cleaned up more than 30 illegal dumpsites each year; and
  - Included more than 5,540 volunteers.
- **Protecting creeks.** Seattle devotes more than \$4 million annually to help creeks by preserving habitat for salmon and other aquatic life, improving drainage, and creating more natural and inviting open spaces for people. Highlights include removing barriers to fish passage and increasing storm water detention to improve water quality in Thornton Creek. The City also restored stream channels and added native vegetation along Longfellow Creek.
- **Reducing waste.** Starting in 2006, Seattle stopped collecting garbage cans filled with large amounts of recyclable materials. In the first three weeks of enforcement, more than 90 percent of inspected apartments and businesses were recycling correctly.
- **Expanding natural drainage systems.** Seattle is recognized as a national leader in developing natural drainage projects, which reduce flooding, improve water quality, provide sidewalks, calm traffic and enhance neighborhood landscaping.
- **Seattle's aquatic life.** The Mayor's "Restore Our Waters" program ensures City government makes smart investments in aquatic projects and encourages private property owners along shorelines to make improvements that will protect and enhance Seattle's bodies of water.
- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.** In 2005, Seattle's garbage and recycling trucks upgraded their exhaust systems and converted to biodiesel and ultra-low sulfur fuel in an ongoing effort to reach climate protection goals and improve air quality. City Light became the first large electric utility in the country to effectively eliminate its contribution of harmful greenhouse gas emissions into the environment.